

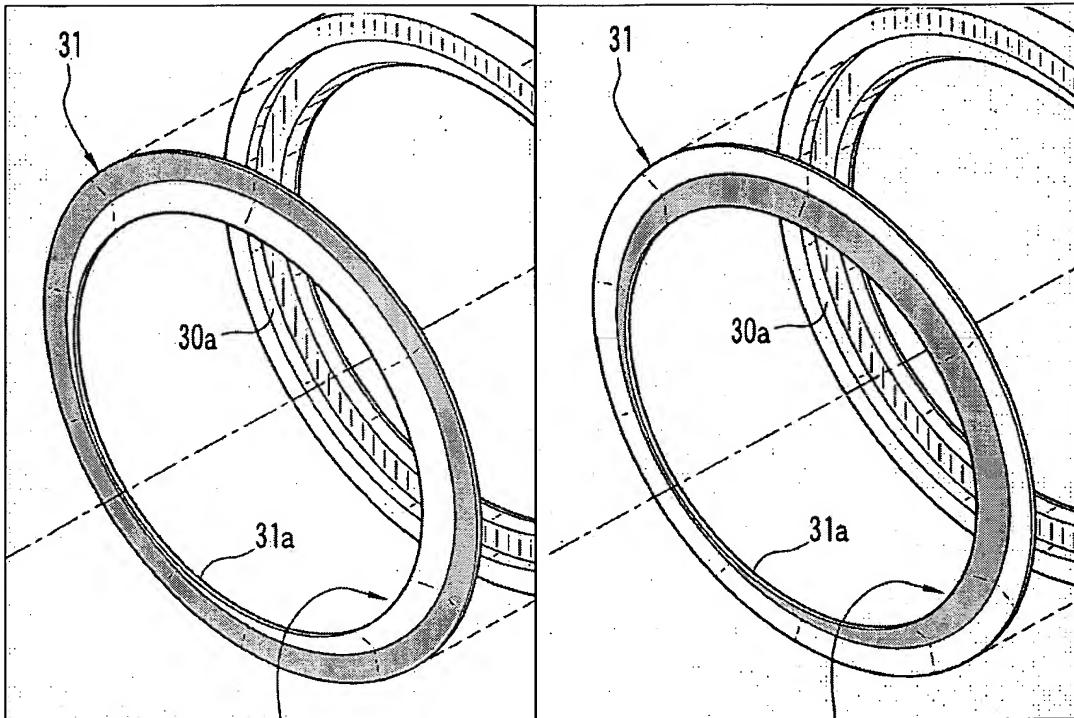
REMARKS

This application is believed to be in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

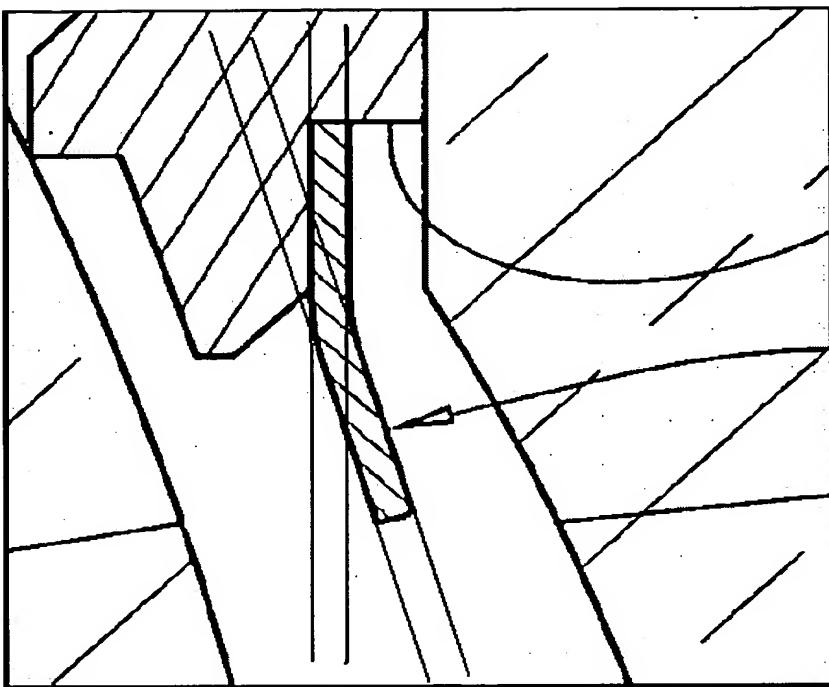
The Official Action objects to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Claim 1 includes the language considered by the Official Action to be unsupported.

Claim 1 recites the flare stopper in terms of a sheet material having an overall shape defined by first and second sections. The first section is then recited as having the shape of a planar ring, while the second section is recited as having the shape of a side face of a circular truncated cone (frustocoone), the outermost portion of the frustocoone meeting an innermost portion of the planar ring.

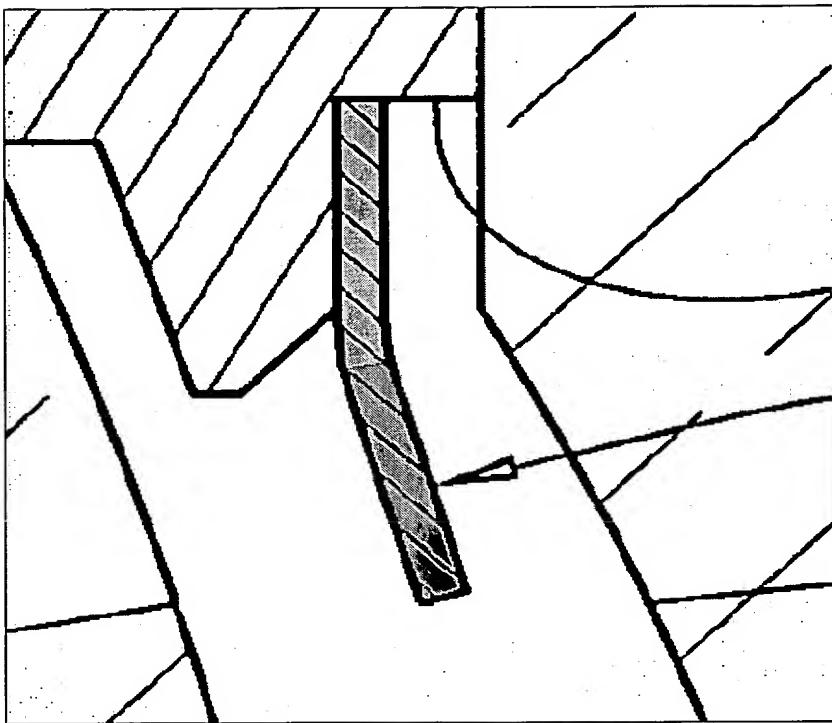
To correct what appears to be a misunderstanding of the recited sections, applicant includes two marked-up reproductions of a portion of Figure 3 below. The first identifies by shading the recited first section. This is the portion of the overall shape of the flare stopper that is in the form of a planar ring. The second illustration identifies by shading the recited second section. This is the section that has the shape of a frustocoone.



The drawings above clearly illustrate a sheet material stamped into an overall shape comprising two distinct sections. The existence of a continuous line separating the two identified portions in Figure 3 as originally filed makes clear that there exists a distinct angle where the two meet. This is even more clear from the reproduction of a portion of Figure 4 below.



The drawing above is a portion of Figure 4, with line segments overlaid thereon. The line segments overlie those lines defining the edges of the flare stopper, as represented in cross section. It is clear from this representation that the recited second section does not have a curved cross section, but rather a linear cross section. Given its overall shape, it therefore necessarily defines the surface of a truncated cone. Consequently, the first and second sections are therefore necessarily those portions of the flare stopper highlighted by light and dark shading, respectively, in the figure below.



Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 21 and 22 under 35 USC §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. In connection with claim 21, the Official Action takes the position that the specification has never disclosed that the flare stopper made by a sheet material is not in contact with any of the plural lens elements. The Official Action then points out, quite correctly, that contact between the lens element and flare stopper is clearly illustrated in Figures 6 and 7.

Figures 4-7 illustrate four different embodiments, respectively. Claim 21 does not read on the embodiments of

Figures 6 and 7. Claim 21 reads on the embodiments of Figures 4 and 5. Figures 4 and 5, together with the associated language in the specification as originally filed, provide evidence that the inventor contemplated at least one embodiment in which the flare stopper made from a sheet material is not in contact with any of the plural lens elements.

The same logic appears to underlie the rejection of claim 22, and the same analysis is therefore offered in response. The embodiments of Figures 6 and 7 clearly are not ones in which the flare stopper makes contact only with the spacer. Claim 22 does not read on such embodiments. Claim 22 reads on the embodiments of Figures 4 and 5. In those embodiments, the flare stopper is in contact with only the spacer 30.

If the present rejection is not withdrawn, applicant respectfully requests that a clarification of the basis for the rejection be provided.

The Official Action rejects claims 1 and 23 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by KOHMOTO 5,420,656. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

The Official Action identifies those elements of the KOHMOTO device considered to meet the recitations of the rejected claims. Absent among those features, however, is that of "an inner periphery of the flare stopper defining a circular opening to pass incident light upon said taking lens". This derives from

the fact that the identified elements 25 and 26 of the KOHMOTO device do not constitute a flare stopper, as that term is generally understood in the art. Rather, elements 25 and 26 form a type of light gasket, creating a light-tight seal between the moveable lens barrel 14 and the cover 11 of the camera body 10.

As such, the elements 25 and 26 of the KOHMOTO device cannot possibly be characterized as "defining a circular opening to pass incident light", for if any light were to pass by an opening defined by element 25 itself, it will necessarily have utterly failed in its stated purpose. While the identified elements of the KOHMOTO device are intended to block light, they lie quite distant from the path taken by incident light within the lens system.

Another shortcoming of the KOHMOTO reference lies in connection with the recited shape of the second section in claim 1. The Official Action makes reference to "a curved section having a shape of a side face of a circular truncated cone inclined to the optical axis of the taking lens system". It is unclear to applicant what the identified curved section having a shape of a truncated cone is.

It is worth noting that a cone is a solid object obtained by rotating a right triangle around one of its two short sides, the cone's axis. A truncated cone is a portion of a three-dimensional body so defined that lies between parallel planes intersecting the cone and lying normal to the cone's axis.

Therefore, as understood by the applicant, there cannot exist a curved cone section.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 1, 6, 23, and 24 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over AZAMI et al. 5,568,322 in view of KOHMOTO. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

As with the anticipation rejection discussed above, the present obviousness rejection relies on the KOHMOTO reference for its asserted teaching of a light-intercepting element that meets the truncated cone feature. As discussed above, the KOHMOTO device cannot reasonably be interpreted as teaching such feature, as it utterly lacks the geometric shape required by this claim. Reconsideration and withdrawal of such rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 2-5, 8-12, 21, and 25 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over AZAMI et al. in view of KOHMOTO, and further in view of the admitted prior art. The present rejection relies upon the interpretation of KOHMOTO that underlies the anticipation and obviousness rejections considered above. Accordingly, irrespective of the teachings attributed to the admitted prior art, the combination nevertheless fails to teach or suggest the full set of features

implicitly recited in the rejected claims by virtue of their dependence from the independent claims.

The Official Action rejects claims 1, 6, 7, 13, and 22 as unpatentable over KUDO et al. 4,886,342 in view of KOHMOTO. As with the previous rejections, the present obviousness rejection relies upon the KOHMOTO reference for its asserted teaching or suggestion of the shape of a circular truncated cone. As demonstrated above in connection with each of the preceding rejections based on prior art, the KOHMOTO reference cannot reasonably be interpreted as teaching this feature, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 2-5, 8-11, and 21-24 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over KUDO et al. in view of KOHMOTO as applied to claims 1 and 6, and further in view of the admitted prior art. This obviousness rejection again relies on the interpretation of KOHMOTO considered above. As the KOHMOTO reference cannot reasonably be interpreted as teaching that for which it is offered, the combination of references necessarily fails to render obvious the invention of the rejected claims.

In light of the analysis provided above, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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